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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In the context of a radio communications system that includes a core network coupled to a radio access network (RAN) and a plurality of mobile terminals, a connection may be established between the core network and one of the plurality of mobile terminals through the radio access network. A temporary RAN identifier is associated with the mobile terminal for the established connection. The temporary RAN identifier is used to assist in the transfer of information pertaining to the established connection or to the establishment of that connection through the radio access network. The radio access network includes a first RAN node associated with a first geographical coverage area and a second RAN node associated with a second geographical coverage area. When the mobile terminal moves from the first coverage area to the second coverage area, the connection is re-established through the RAN by way of the first and second RAN nodes using the temporary RAN identifier. The temporary RAN identifier in packets corresponding to the established connection is used to direct those packets to and from the first and second RAN nodes. The first and second RAN nodes analyze packets corresponding to the established connection including the temporary RAN identifier included in each packet. From analysis of the temporary RAN identifier, the first and second RAN nodes determine where packets are to be routed. The temporary RAN identifier is also advantageously employed to facilitate mobile terminal registration and paging operations.